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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

18 November 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Implications of the Present Situation of the  
Jordanian Regime

1. We have estimated in NIE 30-2-57, "Near East Developments Affecting US Interests", 8 October 1957, that Egypt and Syria would seek to replace the government of King Hussein in Jordan with a radical nationalist government favorable to their point of view, but that they would "try to avoid the break-up of Jordan."

2. We believe that the recent Egyptian-Syrian campaign against King Hussein is part of a continuing effort to stir up the opposition and keep Hussein off balance. The repeated Egyptian invitations to Jordanian dissidents to assassinate the King, however, apparently indicate that the Egyptian and Syrian leaders believe that they can follow up a successful attempt on Hussein's life with a takeover in Jordan by their friends and agents. We assume that the Egyptian and Syrian leaders believe

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
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21 APR 1980  
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this could be done without producing a general blow-up leading to the disintegration of the country and a scramble for Jordanian territory, but we feel that at present there is a good chance they are mistaken in this belief.

3. We believe that King Hussein is currently in control of the army and of Jordan, although we are doubtful of the capability of the regime to maintain control of the situation in the event of his assassination. If Hussein were assassinated, elements of the old pro-Egyptian Nabulsi regime would have a good chance of re-establishing their position. Their main problem would be to gain the support of the bulk of the army. If Bedouin elements, reputed to be loyal to the monarchy, opposed them, a conflict might develop between conservative and radical elements in Jordan which might lead surrounding states to intervene. Israel might move quickly to seize the West Bank. If Israel did so, it seems likely that the major Arab states would intervene against Israel, although they would be primarily concerned to support their own interests in Jordan.

4. It should also be noted that some member of Hussein's regime would probably seek to invoke the American Doctrine. At the same time the USSR, both because of its general interest in

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the area and because of its probable role in encouraging the Egyptians and Syrians to carry out their current campaign against Hussein's regime, might become involved.

5. Unless King Hussein is assassinated, we do not believe that Egyptian and Syrian pressures will soon lead to the Jordanian regime collapsing or abandoning its position. If Hussein were assassinated, we believe that a conflict within the country might, because of Jordan's strategic geographic and political position, lead to a major crisis involving the entire Near East area. Such a crisis could open up possibilities for fundamental changes in basic aspects of the area situation.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

*for*   
SHERMAN KENT  
Assistant Director  
National Estimates

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